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## Post-Fordism and the politics of industry development in Australia

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# **POST-FORDISM AND THE POLITICS OF INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT IN AUSTRALIA**

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award  
of the degree of

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

from

**THE UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG**

by

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**1994**

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## DECLARATION

This work has not been submitted for a degree to any other university or institution

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IAN HAMPSON

## AUTHOR'S PUBLICATIONS RELATED TO THIS RESEARCH PROJECT

Hampson, I (1987) *The 'New Unionism' and the Politics of Industry Regeneration*, Paper presented to the STS post graduate conference, Wollongong University, August.

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## ABSTRACT

Post-Fordism suggests the world's economic travails are the birth-pangs of a new, post-Fordist industrial system, with implications for national industrial adjustment. The thesis is a study of post-Fordism and the course of the recent industrial policy debate in Australia. It is also a critique of post-Fordism (and its sister doctrine 'flexible specialisation'), as an analysis of events in the world economy, and as a model of industrial development. The thesis focuses on the role and fate of the labour movement, in the recent industrial policy debate, for two reasons. First, the labour movement drove the debate over industry policy in the early 1980s, and second, post-Fordism offers misleading prescriptions for the role the labour movement should play in industrial adjustment.

Part one is devoted to exposition and critique of post-Fordism; part two surveys some of the literature on industry development and work organisation, with the question of the roles of the state and the labour movement in mind; part three is devoted to the debates in Australia around industry policy and post-Fordism. The thesis argues that post-Fordism is a flawed account of recent industrial change, and a poor guide to labour movement strategy. It suggests that the union movement's flirtation with enterprise bargaining and certain hostile forms of work organisation is, in some measure, due to strategic miscalculations deriving from the influence of post-Fordism.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACM	Australian Chamber of Manufactures
ACTU	Australian Council of Trade Unions
AFE	Australian Federation of Employers
AIDC	Australian Industries Development Corporation
AIRC	Australian Industrial Relations Commission
ALP	Australian Labor Party
AMEU	Australian Metals and Engineering Union
AMFSU	Australian Metals, Foundaries and Shipbuilders Union
AMWU	Australian Metal Workers Union
BCA	Business Council of Australia
BIE	Bureau of Industry Economics
CAD/CAM	Computer Aided Design/Computer Aided Manufacture
CPI	Consumer Price Index
EBP	Enterprise Bargaining Principle
EPAC	Economic Planning and Advisory Council
ETU	Electrical Trades Union
FIA	Federated Ironworkers Union
FMS	Flexible Manufacturing System
FVIU	Federation of Vehicle Industry Unions
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
HRM	Human Resource Management
IAC	Industries Assistance Commission
IBP	International Best Practice
LO	<i>Landsorganisation</i> (Swedish Peak Union Body)
MEWU	Metals and Engineering Workers Union
MIT	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
MITI	Ministry of International Trade and Industry
MTIA	Metal Trades Industry Association
NDF	National Development Fund
NFF	National Farmers Federation
NWC	National Wage Case
R&D	Research and Development
REP	Restructuring and Efficiency Principle
SAF	<i>Svenska Arbetsgivareforeningen</i> (Swedish Peak Employer Body)
SEP	Structural Efficiency Principle
SPRU	Science Policy Research Unit
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TCF	Textiles, Clothing and Footware
TDC	Trade Development Council
TNC	Trans National Corporation
TQC	Total Quality Control
TQM	Total Quality Management
VBU	Vehicle Builders Union

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